No. 51.

DO YOU WANT A FRIEND?

Do you want a friend, powerful to protect you, rich to supply your wants, kind to sympathize with you, affectionate to feel for you, wise to guide you—a "friend that sticketh closer than a brother;" one to whom you can go at all times, at all seasons, under all circumstances; one to whom you can open all your heart; one who is worthy of all the affection of your soul; one whom you can esteem and delight in; one who is able to satisfy all that craving desire of happiness which you feel—who can assist you when all other friends fail—who can support you in your last agonies, and walk with you through the valley of the shadow of death; one whose influence and power extends beyond the grave—who is able to save you from the fire of hell, and to give you a place among the sons of God?

Reader, as you are a lost, perishing sinner, if you desire such a friend, let me tell you, to your joy, that I know of one, who is not only *all* that this description implies, but who is one that is far more valuable, far more excellent, far more desirable. His name is Jesus. He is *powerful* to protect you; for he is the Son of the living God, and all power is given unto him in heaven and in earth. He is rich to supply you, for he is God, the all-sufficient. In him are all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. Are you, in a spiritual sense, poor, and wretched, and miserable, and blind, and naked? He will sell thee "gold that thou mayest be rich"—sell it thee "without money and without price." He will give thee "white raiment that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness may not appear:" he will "anoint thine eyes with eye-salve, that thou mayest see:" he will give thee of his Holy Spirit, that thou mayest see thy need of Christ, and

discover his infinite power, and his gracious willingness to supply all thy need. By this blessed gift of his Holy Spirit, thou shalt have such discoveries of his glorious majesty, as "God over all, blessed for evermore," as shall lead thee to call him LORD, so as none can do but by the Holy Ghost. And when oppressed in spirit under a sense of the sinfulness of thy nature, this adorable Comforter will testify of Jesus to thee, and give thee such confidence in the assurance that his blood cleanseth from all sin, as shall bring peace to thy soul. This blessed Spirit will also apply to thy soul all those exceeding great and precious promises of God which are made to them that believe in Christ Jesus, and whereby thou shalt escape the corruption that is in the world, through lust.

Whatever temporal things you may want, this kind Friend is no less able than willing to supply, if they are suitable for you. Do you want one to sympathize with you? Seek Jesus for your friend, and trust in what he has done and suffered for you; believe in the efficacy of his atoning blood, and you will find that there can be no friend more sympathetic than he. He is one "who can have compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way," for that he himself also was compassed with infirmity. He is not one "who cannot be touched with the feelings of your infirmity, for he was in all points tempted like as you are, yet without sin." He is also *affectionate* to feel for you. That love which brought him from the skies he still retains; nor is its warmth diminished. He is *wise* to guide you. He knows all your circumstances, all your difficulties, and all your dangers. He knows what is best for you, and what is the truest wisdom. He, too, is the *Friend that sticketh closer than a brother.* He is never angry without just cause; never led aside by an evil temper. He will bear with your weakness with more than a brother's forbearance. He is one to whom you can go at *all times*, at *all seasons*, and under *all circumstances.* He is not confined to any place; so that, wherever you are, you may have access to him.

No change of circumstances alters his affection. He will befriend you in sickness as well as in health; in age as well as in youth; in adversity as well as in prosperity. He is one to *whom you can open all your heart;* for he has given you such

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amazing proofs of his love, that you cannot doubt his affection. Think of him as God incarnate, God in human flesh, dying for our sins, that we might not perish, but have everlasting life; and you cannot but be willing to pour out your heart before him, to tell him of all your troubles, to confide in his love, and to repose on his bosom. He is one, too, who is worthy of all the affections of your soul; one whom you can esteem and delight in. Such wonderful love towards us, demands our love to him in return. Oh take him for your friend, READER! and then you will perceive how worthy he is of your tenderest affection. Then will he unfold his excellency and goodness, his loveliness and beauty; and you will find him to be the "chief among ten thousand, and altogether lovely."

Reader, you desire to be happy; you thirst for happiness. Repent of sin; go in faith unto *this* Friend, and he will give you of the water of life; give you the influences of the Holy Spirit; give you spiritual health; give you complete enjoyment in communion with God. In vain do you seek for perfect happiness in earthly enjoyments; your desires after happiness are so extensive that nothing can satisfy them but the enjoyment of God. Take JESUS for your Friend, and God will be the joy of your heart, and your portion for ever.

A time is fast approaching when earthly friends cannot aid you; they cannot save you from the hour of death; they cannot support you in your last moments, nor accompany you through the dark valley of the shadow, of death. But the *Friend* now pointed out—the blessed Jesus—he can comfort and support you when all other friends can render you no assistance; he can receive your parting spirit, convey you safely through the shades of death, and bring you to that everlasting happiness which he shed his blood to procure. He died for our sins: believe in him; trust in what he has done and suffered; supplicate God, in his name, for the pardon of your sins and the gift of the Holy Spirit, and you shall be delivered from the "blackness of darkness for ever;" the fire of hell shall never touch you; but you shall dwell in the abodes of light and glory forever and ever. "God so loved the world that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

HYMN.

One there is, above all others,
  Well deserves the name of Friend:
His is love beyond a brother's,
  Costly, free, and knows no end!
They who once his kindness prove,
Find it everlasting love.

Which, of all our friends, to save us,
  Could or would have shed his blood?
But our Jesus died to have us
  Reconcil'd, in him, to God:
This was boundless love indeed!
Jesus is a Friend in need.

When he lived on earth abased,
  Friend of sinners was his name;
Now above all glory raised,
  He rejoices in the same;
Still he calls them brethren, friends,
And to all their wants attends.

O for grace our hearts to soften!
  Teach us, Lord, at length to love;
We, alas! forget too often
  What a friend we have above;
But, when home our souls are brought,
We will love thee as we ought.